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At the November meeting, Reverend Arthur Adams, Ph.D., of Trinity College, gave a talk on "Hamilton's Itinerarium: the journal of a trip through the colonies in 1744." Dr. Adams gave a short biographical sketch of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, the author of the diary, and also a short history of the diary itself. He then read parts describing Hamilton's visits to Connecticut and Rhode Island, forming a most amusing picture of travel, odd characters met on the journey and other aspects of colonial life.

Charles Rufus Harte, of New Haven, read a paper before the December meeting entitled: "John Winthrop, the younger, genius extraordinary." The reader gave a general outline of Winthrop's career and then described in detail the many interests of this unusual man, especially his aptitude for chemical research and astronomy. His interest in metallurgy and his genius as a surgeon and doctor were also stressed.

In December, Thompson R. Harlow, Librarian of the Society, was discharged from the Army and returned to his desk. Mr. Harlow served in the European Theatre and during the past 16 months, has been hospitalized recuperating from wounds received in Normandy.

Recently Professor Robert K. Richardson submitted for publication the memoirs of Mrs. Martha Denison Peet of Stonington. We were intensely interested and decided that many of our members would also share this interest. For a description of early life and times in Connecticut we believe it unique. The memoirs were transcribed and edited by Robert K. Richardson, who was born in Hartford in 1876. He has been for many years Professor of History in Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin, of which he is the Archivist. He is ex-President of the Beloit Historical Society and a Vice-President of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

1854 My Home in Connecticut Fifty Years Ago.*

Among my earliest recollections are the scenes of my school days in the house of the widow Franklin who lived in a small house just by

*[Editor's Note. Mrs. Martha Denison Peet, author of these Memoirs, was born in Stonington, Connecticut, March 17, 1796. On her mother's side she was of the Williams family. At the age of seventeen she married Rev. Henry Sherman, grandson of the distinguished Roger Sherman, bearing him one daughter. He was for a time pastor of a church in Weston, Connecticut. Mr. Sherman died in 1815, under the circumstances set forth in the Memoirs; and for the nine years following his widow resided with her late husband's mother in New Haven. In 1826 she

the shore, and her school was in the chamber, a low room, the window looking out upon the broad ocean. It was divided by a slight partition from the back part, her bedroom, and there it was the privilege of those she could trust from her eye to take their work, and sew, or learn a lesson. I well remember sitting in this little room, on a low seat, and striving to do my task or learn my lesson; and the benignant smile of approbation from my dear teacher is still impressed upon my memory. It was then the custom to devote most of the school hours to sewing, and little girls would make fine shirts for their fathers or brothers by the teacher's doing some of the most difficult part, and often a girl of nine or ten years would make the entire garment, and it was exhibited to the delight of the child quite equal to that they now receive for a piece of fine wrought worsted work.

Our pastime was spent upon the shore, for we had no yard or other place to play, and one amusement was to skip from rock to rock without stepping on the sand; and often when the tide was rising, it would come over our playground, and we would follow the boldest far out into the water at the risk of slipping in, and not only wetting our feet but of being sent home with our garments dripping from an unfortunate slip. The shore was covered with a variety of seaweed, and another amusement was to dress (1/2)† what we called a sea-nymph with the sea-ruffle, a substance resembling oil-silk, of several feet in length and often of various colors. With this we adorned the waist, falling like a loose robe, and we would braid chains of the long sea-grass for the head and neck, and suspend a round, flat piece we called the watch. It was a mark of favor to be the chosen one for exhibition. At low water shells of various kinds were found upon the shore, and here I can trace the taste imbibed for these flowers of the sea that has to this day been as great a source of pleasure as the beholding the beautiful flowers of the earth.

My teacher was a Christian, and from her I received all the religious instruction adapted to my age, for my parents were not religious and there were no sabbath-schools or religious libraries for children in

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married Rev. Stephen Peet, subsequently missionary superintendent in Wisconsin; promoter of the Presbyterian-Congregational Conference of Wisconsin; and leading founder both of Beloit College and of Chicago Theological Seminary. By Mr. Peet she had three sons and two daughters. All six children survived her.

Mr. Peet died in 1855. Save for a brief removal with her husband to Batavia, Illinois, Mrs. Peet lived in Beloit, Wisconsin, from 1844 to her death, November 13, 1877. Her last years were feeble and marked by failing mental health.

The Memoirs, as printed, are corrected and modernized in spelling and punctuation. They were penned at a reasonably advanced age, doubtless for her children, without thought of publication; in a hand not always steady and incapable of reproduction in type; and with such disregard of the niceties of capitalization, spelling and even of syntax as might be expected of one receiving the type of instruction described in the Memoirs. Mrs. Peet was a cultured woman whose youth had fallen in times before Joseph Emerson, Zilpah Grant Banister and Mary Lyon had done their work.

The manuscript came into possession of Beloit College from the family papers of the late William Fellows Peet, of St. Paul, Minnesota.

R. K. R.]

†Figures set thusly refer to end of page and beginning of next in the original manuscript.

those days. We were taught the Assembly's Catechism, and a reward was given to the scholar that would repeat the whole, asking herself the question and giving the answer. This practice I have felt the benefit of to this day, and often, when reflecting upon a particular doctrine, the answer to the question has directed me to Bible truth and helped me to comprehend important subjects. I trace my first religious impressions to this teacher, and have ever felt, next to parents, the teacher forms the character of the child, and that great care should be used in selecting a teacher for little children. Their tender minds need the fostering care of a loving heart. Such had my teacher, and we loved in return, and great (2/3) was my grief when she left with her only son for what was then the far west, the western part of New York, where she died, leaving this only child the deacon of the church and extending the influence of her piety by the life of a devoted Christian.

The next school was at our village schoolhouse, taught by Elder Gardner, the Baptist minister, but heartbroken by the profligate habits of his only son. I remember his last instructions and the tears he shed while describing the parable of The Lost Sheep, and the impression of his death by his own hands occasioned by the conduct of this son. (In a fit of derangement he cut his own throat.) I can never forget the place I sought to weep alone and the feelings I had about The Lost Sheep. I felt I was one and wanted to be gathered into the fold of The Good Shepherd. But no one thought a child of my age, seven or eight, could be a Christian, and I contented myself by saying my prayers and learning my Catechism.

The next deep impressions was at the death of Lydia C————, a favorite schoolmate. I attended her funeral and remember looking upon her face lovely in death, and hoping to meet her again in another world. Thus death became in early life a great teacher to raise my thoughts from earth to heaven.

Next to the teacher the playmate forms the character of a child and I tremble when I think how terrible was my danger from this source. I was suffered to chose my companions, and there were at this time living near my father's some very wicked girls who filled my ears (¾) with things unfit to hear; and I know not what would have been the consequence of their influence if my parents had not moved into another part of the village. My conscience was disturbed, and probably from reading the dialogue of Christ, Youth and the Devil in the New England Primer from which I learned my Catechism. I had a dream that for a time greatly appalled my mind. I was about ten years old at this time. I dreamed two spirits stood by my bed, one on each side. One held before me the pleasures of the world and I thought I accepted his offer, when the other gave me a look that awakened [me] saying: "In two years I will call for you." I went to my mother, weeping, and told her my dream. I was distressed about my choice and told her I was afraid I had yielded to the evil spirit. She tried to comfort me but directed me [to] a Christian woman who exhorted me to be a Christian, and said she thought I should not live but two years. It was about two years from this time I hope I experienced the saving influences of the Holy Spirit.

At the time of my dream religion was in a very low state. Dancing, card playing and novel reading was almost universal. We had no pastor and only occasional preaching by candidates, a few months at a time. Some of these young men scarcely escaped the pollutions of the place, for I have heard of the young people boasting they joined in card playing and reading novels. The church (4/5) was destitute of a pastor for six years and was reduced to two male members in the village and a few praying females. My impressions wore off and I became extremely fond of dancing, and at that early age was often till a late hour engaged in this amusement. The sound of the violin perfectly enchanted me and I danced in public and in private to my heart's desire, for my parents did not restrain me in pleasure. My mind was left without culture, and my passions suffered to have their full power. What a sad condition! How merciful the interposition of divine mercy! It was not the cultivating of something good in my nature, but a new principle, implanted in me, that changed my disposition.

Saturday evening was kept as holy time and we were at liberty to spend the Sabbath evening in pleasure, and at an early hour the youth would gather in companies and walk till the bell tolled for church, and then fill the galleries and sing the solemn songs of Zion with thoughtless hearts. The old meeting house stood at the entrance of the village upon a high hill, a large, square, high building with three doors—one in front entering a broad aisle that went up to the pulpit, the others upon the two opposite sides. The pulpit was quite high, with a huge framework suspended over it, called the sounding board. And around three sides were galleries where the singers, occupying each part a different side, of almost all ages, gathered in multitudes: and when in fugue tunes the different parts struck in, the house would (5/6) thrill with the sound of many voices. In summer we had a cool breeze from the open doors and large windows, but there was no shade to protect from the full blaze of light, and when the sun poured its direct rays upon you it made those quail who had to face it. In winter there was no means of warming the house. Stoves were not used in those days and it was almost doing penance to sit in a large, cold house till you were so benumbed that you could hardly walk. But it met a severe rebuke to complain of being uncomfortable in the house of God.

The good, old deacons always sat in front of the pulpit, within the altar, and their grey hair and grave countenances awed almost every one. They lived several miles in the country but seldom failed of being present. The church at the village and one two miles in the country were one church, and supplied by one minister, preaching in the morning at the road meeting house and in the afternoon and evening at the village. The house at the road was still more antiquated. The seats around the sides were square pews, raised two or three feet above the aisle, and the breast work almost hid the people, their heads but little more than rising above the box, that hid little children, who often sat upon a low seat so that they could hardly see people or preacher.

My grandfather was deacon of this church more than fifty years. (6/7) He lived to be eighty two. My birth place was not far from here, at the old Denison farm that had been in the family name for five gen-

erations from the first settler, George Denison, whose history is given in the history of the Williams family. My mother was the daughter of . . . [sic] *

My father moved to the *Point* when I was in my sixth year. The village is upon a narrow strip of land extending into Long Island Sound. Upon the extreme point is a light house from which two others can be seen in two different states: one upon the end of Long Island, Montauk, the other at Watch Hill, in Rhode Island. Between them opened the broad Atlantic, and when a long storm had raised the mountain waves they came rolling their whitecapped torrents, dashing upon the beach with a force that made the earth tremble and with a roar of many waters.

From the southeast windows of my father's house this scene was full before me, and the roaring ocean and raging tempest learned [sic] me to love the grand and sublime; and every hill top, light house and steeple was climbed, and impressions of the vastness and sublimity of nature indelibly impressed upon my imagination when but a little child.

From the west a very different scene was presented. The harbor made up into a cove that like a river divided us from the opposite sides where green banks, covered with groves and dotted with the white houses of the fishermen and farmers variegated a beautiful rural scene: and when the last rays of the setting sun illuminated the (9/10) prospect reflected upon the blue waters, it inspired my mind with bright anticipations of that happy land beyond the Jordan of death, where "they have no need of the sun for the Lamb is the light thereof."[1]

The principal business of the place at this time was. [sic] The cod fishing vessels, loaded with salted, undried fish would spread their load upon the flakes upon the common around the light house, and at night pile them in stacks as high as they could reach, resembling stacks of hay or grain, but not as fragrant. After a time the sealing and whaling business greatly enriched the place. Marvelous stories of Boreas and Neptune were familiar to my ears, and a knowledge of most all parts of the world gained from those who delight to entertain their friends with accounts of what they have heard, seen and felt.

I advanced from the village school to the academy, a large, two-story building situated upon a high hill one side of the village. A school for the boys and older girls was taught in one room by a gentleman, and by a lady in the other for small children. I well remember one day in the month of July, 1805. As I rounded this hill a black cloud was rising behind me, and so striking was its appearance I stopped and turned round to gaze upon it. (10/11) It was tinged with a bright edge and rose with such rapidity that I had scarcely entered the school house before the windows were ordered to be closed, and the children involuntarily laid their heads upon the desks before them. The lightning was terrific and the thunder awful. The lightning rod by the balcony [MS, *bellcony*] had by some means been moved from its place and the first I knew, after a terrible crash, the children were rushing out of the

* The rest of page 7 and all of page 8 are blank.

[1] *Cf. Revelation,* XXI, 23.

house. I was in a back seat, and as I came into the hall I saw the female teacher with a little girl in her arms, and the male teacher throwing water upon her: but I was hurried with the flying children to the nearest house. We soon learned that Charlotte Niles, who lived next door to my father's, was killed. She was greatly alarmed from the first and changed her seat twice, once by the teacher, and then by her older sister and a favorite mate, where she alone was killed, the others only feeling the shock, without injury. The fluid came down at her back and ran under her feet, driving a nail quite through her foot and burning the clothes off her back. It crossed the room and went out of a window upon the opposite side, and tore a deep hole in the earth just beyond. The children followed this mate to the grave in a large procession. But terrible as was the (11/12) event I don't know that it made any lasting impression.

Several other deaths that were very awful occurred not far from this time. A near neighbor and infidel, and son of an infidel, had led a profligate life and brought upon himself disease in early life. I have seen his distorted countenance, and heard his horrid oaths, and hurried from his sight with terror. Such was his anger that his brothers and sisters were afraid to approach him to perform acts of kindness to his poor body. He died without any change, but it led some of his brothers to see infidelity would not do for a death bed, and one of them became a minister of distinguished usefulness. Another was a sea captain, with a family. His excesses brought upon him dropsy. I saw him bolstered in bed, striving to ward off the approach of death, using every means he could hear of for a cure and only hastening his end. He would [do] nothing about dying, and when I saw him last, with his eyes filmed with death, he would stretch out his arms as if to keep something away. He, with an oath, would exclaim: "Take away those devils; I won't go; they have come for me!"

These horrid deaths were known and talked about, but no one seemed to take the alarm. There was no visible change in the place. Intemperance was almost universal. Scarcely a house was without a drunken inmate, and in the first (12/13) families it was not uncommon that a member was a perfect vagabond. The famous Tom Paine was invited into the place, and into the desk of the Baptist church, by one who had once been a member of that church. I remember my mother called me to the window, and his bloated, red face, old hat and gray overcoat presented the appearance of a drunkard. The apostate who invited Tom Paine died a horrid death, leaving the death bed of his eldest son who was dying of delirium tremens. He rode to his own house about half a mile distant and was helped from his horse and died in a fit four days before this son. His other two sons died drunkards. This was the end of a scoffer who had used the Bible for waste paper and ridiculed the Savior as a vile impostor.

Some facts respecting slavery at this time. My father had to help support, out of my grandfather's estate, an old servant, Tilles. She lived to a great age and, in her last years, at the house of my uncle. But I often visited there and always carried something as a present. I remember how she would lay a hand upon my shoulder and, with a

shake that would almost make my teeth chatter, she would say: "God bless your little soul! I loved your father and tended him on my knees when a baby, and he don't forget his old Mama." Another old servant, from my mother's family, Scipio, lived till blind, and I remember well his white, woolly head, and hearing him (13/14) tell about Africa. He was twelve years old when brought from that country, and he always believed that when he died he should go back to his native land. Not long before his death I stood by him, a little child. When Chloe, who took care of him, jeeringly said: "I guess Sip is going to die, for he says he dreamed last night he went back to Africa," he gravely answered: "I shall soon go there." Thus he died a heathen in good, old Connecticut, not half a century ago, after having lived from twelve years of age in Christian families. I saw, a few years after, Chloe upon her death bed, and heard her say: "I don't know what will become of me after I die, for I have been very wicked and I have never read the Bible." I tried to lead her to the Savior, who gave himself for all men of every kindred and nation, but she seemed to feel it was too late for her, she was so wicked and ignorant.

There were slaves in almost all the families of my relatives and in my father's family, but very few of them could read, and many had never had much religious instruction. But there were some distinguished Christians. Lucy, the daughter of Piro, was a member of our church and female prayer meeting, and I have heard her pray with a humility and fervor that affected my heart—though such was the prejudice of caste that she sat at communion season by herself, and would even in our little circle take a place as though she felt beneath us. Her father, Piro, was a Baptist, brought up in a Baptist family. (14/15) Her mother lived in a family of our persuasion, but they often came to our church together, dressed in a neat style. But Piro always wore a white cap or turban that in contrast with his black face gave him a striking appearance. His master gave him a piece of land and built him a house, and for years after his master's death he lived alone in it, and the voice of prayer was often heard by those who passed by. In his old age his wife lived with him and they were comfortably taken care of. He spoke very broken; but it was an invariable custom, when spoken to, to reply: "God bless you, dear Massa (or Misse), great blessing, great blessing!"

His eldest daughter married a barber and lived in Boston. After a time he went to Petersburg [Saint Petersburg] and with the rest of the sailors stood in the streets to see the Emperor Alexander pass—when the Emperor ordered his carriage to stop and this negro to come to him. It was the first he had ever seen the felt of his woolly hair; and asked him if he would come and wait upon his person. He replied he could not for he had a wife and children in America. He sent for the Captain and they prevailed upon him to stay and send for his family, but his wife refused to go without he came for her. And he was sent back and with his wife came to visit and take leave of her parents. I remember their stylish appearance as they passed round the village.

The history of Esther Jumbo was deeply affecting. Her master was intemperate and treated her with great cruelty, tieing her up and whip-

ping her unmercifully, till, driven to desperation, she attempted to run away; but was caught, and placing her feet upon a plank he with an axe chopped off all her toes. She walked crippled (15/16) but was one of the happiest Christians I ever knew. She never learned to read, but would get others to read to her and could repeat more Scripture than most who can read. I have heard her relate the death scene of her master. He was days dying in agony and remorse, and if she came in sight he would scream as though a horrible image presented itself. She would weep at the recollection of his horrid death.

In the north part of the town was the Mohegan reservation and the remnant of that tribe still lived. It was the birthplace of the distinguished minister Ocum,* who went to England in behalf of the education of American Indians. There had been a flourishing church and school in the place, but the glory had departed, and like the doomed nations of Canaan were [*sic*] fast dwindling away. A daughter of Ocum was distinguished for her beauty; and I have seen females beautiful in form and feature, but it only made them a marked prey for the seducer. Virtue was hardly known among them. The Pequots and Narragansetts were near neighbors and some famous battles were fought here. I have heard the Indians lament their fallen greatness and recount the history of their tribe with deep emotion.

The passing away of any people is affecting. It teaches the instability of all things; and though the natives of our land were not advanced in art and science, they had a true elevation of mind in some respects and were a reproof to the white settlers in some traits of character. The state of morals in my native village was very low. Intemperance prevailed and every gentleman had his sideboard furnished like a barroom, and the liquor case was an ornament to the dining room.

In 1808 there was the first revival I had ever heard (16/17) or known much about. We had been six years without a pastor, and religion was very low. A powerful revival was enjoyed in New London, and I heard it spoken of. I remember, as I met my mother one morning, she said to me, with a solemn countenance: "The evangelist from New London took tea at Mrs. Sanford's with us last evening and is going to preach tonight." It struck my heart with an awe like hearing of some wonderful personage: but it passed off, and I went to school and took my seat as usual. But in a little time E. York said to me: "Look at S. S————. She is reading her Bible and has been ever since she came in." She was the daughter of one of our best females. As I looked at her, the conviction rushed upon my mind: She is seeking the knowledge of God, and it was time for me to attend to my salvation. I tried to study but my feelings overcame me, and, bursting into a flood of tears, I lay my head upon the desk, till my teacher came and enquired the cause. I could not tell him, but asked permission for S———— S———— and myself to go out. I told her my feeling, and she tried to encourage me to seek the Lord.

*Samson Occom.

(To be continued)

The price of these Bulletins is ten cents each.